OP, JW

8/31/71

Mr. Goeffrey Wolff
c/o Jerry Policoff,

Dear Mr. Wolff,

When Jerry Policoff phoned me last night about another matter, he told me you had written him to dispute my account of what you have, for whetever reason, made into an incident. It is my concern for you alone that impels this letter, for which I do not have time. I began writing at 5:30 a.m. this morning, I have to do a late-night radio show tonight, and I have at least six books started and continue my investigations, including today, in the Archives. At past 58, I still work a day few young man can or will attempt.

However, each morning, because my doctor wants me to. I lay writing and research aside long enough to tak a brisk wa;k in the mountains in which we live. This is my thinking time. I think of my research, plan my writing for which I never have time for outlines or notes. If this may show in the finished product, the mangitude of what I have undertaken and of my output leaves no alternative. Although I am at the end of an other book, working on the last chapter, you were on my mind this morning. So.before I return to work, I am writing you.

Obviously, neither you nor I can do anything for the book FRAME-UP now, six months after pub date. David and Harris arranged no single promotion and the intent of the Times, literary assassination, has become the reality. The incredible part to me is that you loaned yourself to this. Please remember that once your letter appeared, I wrote Leonard asking that he send you a copy of it and of my unanswered letter of 1966 to you. You and he -and the despicable Kaplan who has become a sick man on the subject of assassinations- all failed to reply. So there is no gain for me, none possible, in taking this time.

Jerry said you have a low opinion of the writing in FRAME-UP. We both know how subjective these opinions are. You are not alone in expressing it, nor are you in the majority of the opinions expressed to me. Nor is it relevant. Neither you nor any reviewer reviews only those books he likes. However, nothing has changed since we first discussed my writings, when I apologized for handing you a rough draft, which is what the private (and reprint) printing of WHITEWASH. Everything I have published is the rough draft, with the exception of FRAME-UP, which Harris, personally, edited. But it is an edited rough draft, contracted from about twice that size. From the book I handed you in May of 1966 until today, aside from two-dozen file drawers of research, which represents considerable work, I have published well over a million words of solid, schoarly research, successful challenge of which has not been made and no single claim of inaccuracy has ever been made to my face, including by the uninformed sycohpants (published in serial form by the Washington Post) and Commission lawyers. Quite the contrary, one of the members of the Commission thanked me for some of it. It is obvious I have not exploited this in my writing. But considering the size of what I have done, size alone, and the fact that I have been all alone, with neither income nor subsidy, I had no choice. I could not sit and hone, could not revise and edit. The choice was and remains between this and marking the historical record that rightly or wrongly I consider must be. I know of nobody else in the work who has been willing to ruin his personal life and branrupt himself to do it. Perhaps history will record my judgement wrong, but there now seems to be no prospect. You do not know what I know. but you have read two of my books and these alone should have made you apprehensive about the kind of society in which we live.

In FRAME-UP there is one exception to an undeviating practice. I identified the writer of everything quoted and referred to by name, even when it was wire copy. I had reasons, including the fact that the one part of out society that, by and large, was true to its traditional responsibilities, was the working, on-the-street, newsman. You are the one exception. The failure of the press to fulfill its traditional role was management and editorial fault, not that of the reporters. Without the abdication of its watchdog role in our society, none of the needless tragedies in the wake of the great on, the assassination of John Kennedy, would have come to pass. With the Post this was particularly true because

of Wiggins, who cast hispaper in what I regard as a subversive role, that of an unofficial arm of government. The Post is now being honest about it. Recently Dick Harwood said so quite explicitly in a sing ed-page article, and made clear, without naming him, that it was Wiggins' doing. In this footnote I carefully avoided naming or even identifying you because I knew this earlier. As you realize, I also wrote that footnote long before this belated admission by the Post. I had had personal dealings with Wiggins, all faitfully and contemporaneously recorded and filed, in files that will someday be part of an Archive in a major university. Louis Heren, who had read the book in manuscript and on his own offered to and did submit it to his own British published (the negative decision was policy, not editorial), phoned Wiggins, who invited me to meet with him. Wiggins told me to write him a column and he'd print it. He never did. B ut in mention of you, I even masked the fact that you were book-review editor.

The only identification of Geoffrey Wolff is that sad business is by Geoffrey Wolff.

One of the few things Jerry told me of your letter is that you think or imply I could have made these n otes after your letter was published by the Times. This is as falso as it is impossible.First, as my files and this letter will show, I do not even take time to read and correct my terrible typing, for to do that is at the cost of other work. I have hundreds of hours of untranscribed tapes of interviews. I haven't written any notes at any later time and all are dated. These have, in addition, internal dating. My poverty has been such that I have always used whatever second-hand paper I had at any time, always using all of it up before I bought any. Thus you will find that as I wrote WHITEWASH on the back of second-hand mimeographed literature about my farm, the notes of my conversations with you and others at the Post and even the carbons of some of my correspondence are on this kind of paper. Successively I used whatever second-hand paper was available, often the discarded letterheads of businesses and offices that moved, given to me by kind friends who, knowing I was broke, save this for me when they saw it. The typewriter used was older that you when I had to discard it, perhaps a year ago. And the best proof you can learn for yourself. It happens that from time to time young people come here. They have unimpeded access to my files for their own work. Onthe occasion of publication of your letter, when Jerry phoned me ab out it, Howard Roffman, who had just completed his first year at the University of Pennsylvania, was out guest. While I was talking to Jerry, who was asking me questions, I called to Howard. I have a separate file on the non-publishing history of WHITEWASH. Howard went to it, removed the appropriate file, and it is he, not I,who selected from it the relevant parts that I then quoted to Jerry over the phone. If you sincerely believe what I have trouble believing you do not, confabulation and conscience being what they are, Howard lives at 8829 Blue Grass Road, Philadelphia 19152. But the fact is that you are wrong. The fact also is that neither you nor Leonard did the obvious and customary, checked with me. And the fact is that your letter to the Times is irrevelant to the character or content of the Kaplan review. Whatever impelled you to do what I would have thought so out-of-character for you, you were in every detail wrong and you thus became part of a shameful thing, the deliberate literary assassination of the only work presenting the other side of the official mythology about the most costly single crime in history. You also became a self-appointed apologist for the unacceptable and inexcusable, the federal record in this and other assassination investigations. It is for you to live with, not me. I think, in time if not already, unless you are a man entirely un like the man I met in 1966, this will nag you. It should. It is a rotten thing. To b lame me for your lack of independence when your livelihood was in issue is as cowardly as it is dishonest.

I ask nothing of you. There is nothing you can do to undo the harm you have done. I can conceive of no way of reviving what you helped the Times kill. The one thing I would think the man I met five years ago would want to do is clear his own conscience.

And by the way, it is not alone you who discussed your then opinion of HWITEWASH we me. You discussed it with your then secretary, Vivian Hudkin, who discussed it with me on several occasions when I had sought you out or dropped in to see Paul Herrin and you were n ot in. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg